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# SERMON.

LUKE xix. 10.

*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

THESE words occur twice amidst the scanty records of our Lord's speeches contained in the four Evangelists. They seem to be the utterance of the thought which was perpetually present to His mind as He surveyed that wide waste which sin had spread over the world, and which He had come into it to restore to fertility and beauty. They are manifestly in their very sound the breathing forth of infinite compassion and self-sacrifice. They are the sigh of perfect sympathy: the voice of the "Son of man:" of the one true and perfect Man, as His all-pervading glance took in and measured all the vast capacity of joy and exaltation, and all the dark reality of degradation and misery, which belonged to His brethren after the flesh. They give the reason of His own unspeakable humiliation,—of His quitting the bosom of the Everlasting Father, of His lying in the cradle at Bethlehem, of His sitting weary on the well side at Sychar, of His weeping over the grave of Lazarus, of His fainting on the Mount of Shame, of His hanging on the Cross on Calvary: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Words such as these, my brethren, I think may best set the tone of our thoughts to-day, when we are to keep our first anniversary of this new institution, the special aim of which is indeed "to seek and to save those who," almost beyond others, "are" at present "lost." For what, I imagine, we purpose in keeping this anniversary is, first, to seek from God a richer blessing on our efforts; and, next, to stir up our hearts to more labour, more prayer, and more self-denial in the work; and where can we more surely learn to grow in these graces than beneath the Cross of our Lord? than in watching His sufferings, in imitating His example, and



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humbly seeking ourselves to follow the pattern which His life sets before us? Let us, then, go on to see in a few particulars which may best suit this place, how closely the work in which we have here engaged is the following of His steps.

Our purpose, as you all know, is to maintain a central institution, which shall be able by the funds which it may collect, and the experience it may gather, to assist the various institutions which throughout the country are endeavouring to provide homes of penitence for those whom sin has ruined; and specially to aid the funds of those to the conduct of which pious women have devoted their unbought services. And surely but few words can be needful to show that to engage in such a work is indeed to follow the footsteps of our Lord.

For, first, how truly "lost" are those for whom we would labour!—lost in every way; first, and chiefly in the degration of their own moral and spiritual being. Whether it was from the mere instinct of the Church, or whether from direct traditional teaching, we know not, but the early Christian writers distinctly identify with this course of life, that indwelling of seven devils from which the mercy of the Lord set free Mary of Magdala; and I know not why we should doubt that such possessions abound now amongst ourselves, except it be that we continually shrink back from the awful truth of the closeness of good and evil spirits to us, even in this our present state. For we see amongst ourselves beyond all doubt very much the same outward appearances as those pictured by the Evangelists. We have forms of sickness common amongst ourselves, which we describe by the very words in which they describe certain classes of these demoniacal possessions. Amongst us, as amongst them, persons proclaim of themselves that evil spirits have taken up their abode within them. Moreover, whilst we receive it as undoubtedly true, that the possessions recorded in the Evangelists were real and actual occupations of the soul and body of those miserable victims by the powers of evil, we read in contemporary history of nothing which would lead us to suppose that anything then occurred which presented itself as unusual to the ordinary eye. Probably at the most what then happened was nothing more than that the direct meeting of the Christ with the working of these fearful spiritual enemies of man forced them to manifest their hidden and not unusual presence; and thus compelled them to foreshow to all the people of Christ the malignant subtlety and most close presence of those spirits of evil, with whom more than even with flesh and blood, they in His strength should have to wrestle.

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Certainly it exactly accords with the mysterious hints which St. Paul drops, both as to the connection of the body of the regenerate man with his spiritual life, and as to the peculiar provocation of God's Spirit, and the clinging closeness to his own personality, of sins of this class, to suppose that some special and peculiar abandonment to the power of the enemy is the consequence of wilful and habitual impurity.

I need but remind you, without dwelling further on them, of such awful intimations as these:—"Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body."* "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid! . . . Flee fornication, every sin;" that is plainly, every other sin "that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"† . . . "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."‡

And then further,—and as though interpreting these awful hints of God's word,—how many appearances are there in such lost ones of the presence of strange and even supernatural wickedness. To say nothing now of the cruelty and iniquity of every kind, which seems oftentimes, during the continuance of their life of crime, to liken them in manifested character to what we read in Scripture of the spirits of evil, those who have watched over the recovery of such can tell us much of a like working, even in the course of that restoration. They can speak of the fierceness and duration of their temptations, and that mainly of temptations which seem not directly connected with their special sins—of their dark, suspicious, irritable, unbridled, rebellious, or greedy, or childish tempers—of their half-consciousness of being the victims of some evil power which for the time subdues utterly their will—of the well nigh deadly struggles of the reluctantly departing devils.

Here, then, first in the degradation of their own moral and spiritual nature, are those for whom we would labour most truly lost.

And then, besides this, how are they *lost* in the sense of their being utterly separated outcasts on the dark mountains of an abandoned life! Who, in this respect again, are lost like them? with no approach of natural affection ever visiting and cheering their wretched hearts—disowned and rejected even in the lowliest home,—the most utterly lost of all

* 1 Cor. vi. 13. † Ibid. vi. 18, 19. ‡ Ibid. iii. 17.



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weary wanderers through the tangled paths of a cold and selfish world. How, again, are they lost in present misery, the bitter fruit of sin! How does death, even in the midst of life, feed with his sharpest tooth on their tormented bodies! How are the corruptions and horrors of the pit seething loathsomely within them, even as they glide here and there, with hollow cough and the ghastly counterfeit of mirth, along our midnight streets, to their sudden and almost inevitable end! And how is the havoc of the body but the forecast shadow of the deeper agony of an utterly despairing spirit! What a fearful revelation of long-endured misery is contained in every one of those desperate instances of suicide, which every now and then break with their wild shriek of agony through the well arranged respectabilities of our ordinary life! —and this misery is their daily portion. Where can they look for so much as one gleam of comfort? around them is joyless contamination; behind them, the remembrance of better things from which they are irrecoverably parted; above them, an offended God; within them, if they dare to look inward, a crushing sense of utter degradation—hell already in the first gnawing of the undying worm, and the near bellowing of the unquenchable fire; whilst close before them, and with its smoke and flames cast already in their face, is the inevitable pit, with its outer darkness, its gnashing of teeth, and its endless wailing. More affecting is it to see the deep impress of this past misery on those who, in one of our homes of mercy, are delivered from its sharpest sting: to see, as I have seen, a whole company of such fall, as beneath a bolt from heaven, into an agony of tears, upon the mere mention of the lost home, though the very meanest, of their early years, of the parents' love from which they were divided, and the life of purity from which sin had ravished them.

Surely we have seen enough to feel that, if the Son of God came to those who were lost, and if we are to follow His steps, these almost above all are they whom we should seek. Yea, for here too stands His example before us, we are to seek them; they are too outcast and too wretched to seek us; they cannot believe in sympathy; the sense of true humanity has died out of their miserable hearts. They have been too long used as the worthless instruments of the vilest selfishness. They have no belief in the truth and purity of affection left in their burnt out hearts. They must be sought, even as He has sought us, who left the bosom of the Father, and the inconceivable joys of the glory of the Godhead, to seek us wretched wanderers in a fallen world; and they must be sought for the same purpose that He sought us, who when

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He finds the wandering sheep belated, thorn entangled, lost, "bears it on His shoulders rejoicing." They must be sought that they may be saved by us. O marvellous dispensation of His mercy that so it may be! That first by the mysterious power wherewith the true, unbought, self-sacrificing sympathy of the pure awakens in the lost soul affections which seemed dead, and wins it to feeble and almost despairing efforts after good; that then—by folding them again in His fold; by sheltering them from evil; by calling up the first springs of hope; by nourishing the first faint desire after good; by leading them to prayer; by helping them in temptation; by the firmness of a loving discipline; by forming for them through outward aid made indeed powerful by the co-operation of His grace, new habits of thought and acting, the evil spirits may be driven out of them, and they, lost utterly and dead in trespasses and sins as we know they have been, may again arise and walk in Christ's new life; owning the power of His resurrection and purified by His indwelling spirit.

Yes, beloved brethren, in undertaking this work for God this is our purpose, this our hope: and in seeing how, in spite of all our infirmities, this work of God shall have been marvellously perfected, when at His coming again Christ our Lord shall own such ransomed souls as His, shall be our full and more than sufficient reward.

What, then, do we need to quicken our zeal in so blessed a service? Surely we need no more than to have these great realities whereon we have touched, brought close before our eyes.

First, we need to believe, in very deed, in the fearful evil and misery of sin. This is the root of all true labour for our brethren's souls. It was because He saw indeed, what sin's work was, and must be, through eternity, upon the reasonable creatures of His Father's hand, that the Eternal Son stooped to bear our nature, in order to work out our redemption from its power and curse. It is because we have little real belief in this evil, that we are so apathetic about its cure. This is one of the juggleries which sin passes upon us. Unless we are continually watching ourselves, and redressing our own natural estimate of its evil, by the estimate of it which God's word sets before us, we shall soon lose our sense of its deep misery and absolute defilement; we shall come to think little of it in others, and to endure it in ourselves. Here, then, is the beginning of all increased earnestness in works of the highest mercy. For this let us seek to-day: and as to know indeed the evil of sin we must see its evil in ourselves, let us seek, as God's gift, for some greater insight into ourselves;

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let us strive after more habitual self-watchfulness, — after a more tender sense of the beginnings of sinful indulgence in our own souls, — after a more earnest desire to have sin cast out, and God's work deepened in ourselves. And then, next after the sense of the evil which we have to redress, we must believe in the reality of the remedy for it, given us by God. Any doubt here will paralyse all our efforts. If we would go forth strong in the Lord for such a work, we must believe in His strength, and we must know that His strength is indeed with us. Any doubt on our own minds as to the reality of Christ's one and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, or of His spiritual presence with us, or of our being indeed in the kingdom of His grace, or of His blessed Spirit's working with and through our weakness, must make our hands hopelessly weak, and our hearts altogether faint. So that here again the true measure of our power of service, will be the reality of our own faithful dependence upon Him and communion with Him. This only will open our eyes to see the power of His Cross in the salvation of sinners. We shall understand, that what seem to us the different degrees of guilt are, when viewed in relation to that Cross and its work of restoration, but as points of undistinguishable distance. Those great truths, which the self-righteous Pharisee can never understand, will dawn more clearly upon us. We shall enter into the meaning of the declaration which must have so amazed the thankless Simon, "Wherefore," because of thy cold thankless judging temper, "I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."* Oh! that now this day at His Holy Table we may learn something more than we have ever learned before of these heavenly truths, — that a more living sense of the evil of sin, of the blessedness of salvation, of the power of the Saviour's Cross, of the reality of His work within ourselves, of the infinite debt of gratitude we owe him, and so that a more passionate desire to bear His witness and carry His salvation to our brethren, might be stirred up within us; and that being thus ourselves quickened by His grace, we might enter with renewed zeal and an increase of His blessing on our second year of service.

Now, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, one Blessed and Adorable Godhead, be ascribed praise, and honour, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

* St. Luke, vii. 47.

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## OFFICE, 35. LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS.

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# REPORT

OF THE

# CHURCH PENITENTIARY ASSOCIATION,

PRESENTED AT

THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING, HELD AT THE

ROOMS OF THE ASSOCIATION, ON TUESDAY THE 26TH APRIL, 1853.

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IT is with great thankfulness that the Council find themselves called upon to make their First Annual Report of the proceedings of the Church Penitentiary Association.

Though but little more than a year has elapsed since it commenced operations in its present form, a progress has been made which, however slight it may appear at first sight, has more than realised their most sanguine expectations.

With the funds which have been placed at their disposal, they have been enabled to assist in the establishment of Two Houses of Refuge in London, and to vote a grant of £200 towards the enlargement of the Penitentiary at Bussage in Gloucestershire; and they rejoice to have it in their power to add, that they are prepared, in a few days, to make still further grants, four applications having been received which will be brought under their consideration at the Quarterly Meeting in May. Two of these are from Penitentiaries in the country, situated at Clewer and Wantage respectively; the third is in behalf of a House of Refuge which has been opened in the densely-populated parish of Whitechapel; and the fourth is from one of the two Houses of Refuge mentioned above.

But grateful as we must all feel for the measure of success which has been thus afforded us, it is not to this point alone that the Council would call attention. Not only have funds been entrusted to the Association for distribution, but, what is of far greater importance, two hundred and twenty persons have been enrolled as Associates by the Council, and forty-seven ladies by the Ladies' Honorary Secretary. Of these, some are seeking by personal service to advance the good cause, — ministering in Penitentiaries or in Houses of Refuge to the wants, spiritual and temporal, of their unhappy inmates.—One lady visits constantly in the Hospitals of the Metropolis, for the purpose of reclaiming some of those whom disease has driven to seek shelter within their walls; and many others are ready to undertake the same holy work, so soon as ar-

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rangements can be made for their doing so.* Some contribute their own alms, or collect those of others; some have taken hopeful cases from the different Houses into their own families as domestic servants: and all, we would fain hope, are aiding the work by their constant prayers, without which no other assistance they may offer can be effectual.

Of the good which the Houses of Refuge and the Penitentiaries have been enabled to effect, it is not the province of the Council to speak; sufficient it is to say, that never since their first establishment has a vacancy occurred in any of them which has not been immediately filled up; on the contrary, every day tends to show more clearly the growing necessity which exists both for Houses of Refuge in London and other large towns, and of Penitentiaries in the country. Day after day brings to the doors of the former some poor fallen women, anxiously yearning to leave their course of sin and misery, and to enter upon the path of penitence and virtue; and day after day sees them returning back, despairing and heartbroken, to their abodes of guilt, because the Houses already established are too small to receive them. Could some of the cases of these poor girls be known, they would not fail to call forth the deepest sympathy. There are instances of their sitting for two or three days consecutively upon the door-steps of the Houses of Refuge earnestly seeking admission, and when told of the impossibility of obtaining it, they have urged that plea which none who love Him can bear to hear in vain, "For Christ's sake do take me in." A case might be mentioned in which some of these unhappy women, previously to their admission into one of the Houses, had made a solemn resolution, and even bound themselves by a vow, to seize the first opportunity of quitting their miserable course of life; and for this opportunity they had earnestly prayed. One of these at the tender age of fourteen had been turned out of her home by her stepmother, who gave her half-a-crown, and told her to go and gain her living as she could; another fell in order to obtain food for her starving and dying mother. The latter of these, we are thankful to add, is now happily provided with a situation, and conducts herself most satisfactorily.

It is not, however, to London alone that such cases as these are confined. There is not a town, scarcely a village, in England where some poor women may not be found ready and willing to enter upon a new course of life, were only the opportunity of doing so afforded to them,—were there only Houses open to receive, and kind friends ready to welcome them home to the fold of the Good Shepherd, and by their sympathy and prayers lead them to repentance and to the knowledge of Him. Earnestly, then, would the

* The inestimable benefit of such visitations will be the more apparent, when it is stated that the practice is known to exist of females entering hospitals and hovering about the beds of these poor sufferers, who, under the pretence of washing for them and supplying them with tea and some other little comforts not provided by the hospital authorities, keep them in their toils, and again seize upon them as soon as they leave the hospital.

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Council entreat all those who may hear or read this Report, as they value their own souls, to come forward in Christ's name, and endeavour, at least in some measure, to supply this great and crying want.

But it is not only Houses which are required. It is of great importance that some means should be devised, by which fresh openings in life might be procured for those who are prepared to leave the Penitentiaries, and to seek for themselves an honest livelihood. The Council have therefore, after much consideration, altered their Rules, so as to admit of the application of a part of their funds towards assisting, in certain cases, the emigration of well-tried penitents; and a circular has been sent to the Bishops of the Australian and North American Colonies, and to the Bishop of Cape Town, asking for their advice and co-operation in this delicate matter. Much, however, may be done at home towards affording to those penitents who are prepared for it the opening which they need, if only those persons who have it in their power to do so will consent to receive them as servants into their families. The Council are aware that in many instances this is impracticable. They would, however, venture to add, that if those who are willing to aid them in this manner will have the kindness to communicate with the Ladies' Honorary Secretary, they may rely on the utmost care being taken, that those alone shall be selected for situations who seem to afford the surest grounds for hope of their permanent reformation.

But there is one other point to which, in conclusion, the Council beg to allude. It is the principle of the Association (while it leaves the Houses of Refuge unfettered to adopt that system of management which may be deemed in each case most convenient) to aid those Penitentiaries only which are superintended by self-devoted women, under the guidance, as to spiritual matters, of a clergyman of the Church of England.

It is to this system, as partaking more of the spirit of Him who Himself came to seek and to save the lost, that the Association looks as the chief means, under God's blessing, of carrying out the great object which it has in view. But while many persons are able to give their money, more their prayers, are there few only who are willing to devote themselves, at least at intervals, to the work of ministering personally in such Houses to the recovery of their fallen sisters? The work may, indeed, be difficult,—it is one which, in a pre-eminent degree, needs the exercise of patient and unswerving faith. All who are engaged in it must feel this to be the case. But if there be some things to discourage, is there not, on the other hand, much more to encourage? It is a work full of interest, a work worthy of the followers of Him who came to redeem, and one which has special promises attached to it. Even though the result of such labours may seem small when the number of souls converted be counted, yet we are told that "there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth;" and St. James says expressly that, "If any do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

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CHURCH PENITENTIARY ASSOCIATION (*Receipts and Expenditure*), *from January 1st, 1852, to March 31st, 1853.*

*Dr.* *Cr.*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January 1. 1852, to March 31. 1853. | To Donations | £1292 | 9 | 1 | | | | |
| | Subscriptions | 195 | 2 | 6 | | | | |
| | | | | 148 | 11 | 7 | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | £1487 | 11 | 7 | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January 1. 1852, to March 31. 1853. | By Grants, viz. — | | | | | | | |
| | Pimlico House of Refuge | £100 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | Regent's Park ditto | 100 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | | | | | £200 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Salaries, viz. — | | | | | | | |
| | Clerk | 50 | 5 | 6 | | | | |
| | Collector | 2 | 1 | 0 | | | | |
| | Office keeper | 9 | 15 | 0 | | | | |
| | | | | | 62 | 1 | 6 | |
| | Furniture— | | | | | | | |
| | For fittings of the Rooms | - | | - | 99 | 0 | 10 | |
| | Advertisements— | | | | | | | |
| | Paid sundry Newspapers | - | | - | 50 | 1 | 0 | |
| | Stationery and Printing — | | | | | | | |
| | Sundry accounts | - | | - | 58 | 4 | 6 | |
| | Expenses, viz. — | | | | | | | |
| | Rent of Rooms | 120 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | Postages, Carriage and Porterage | 18 | 3 | 4 | | | | |
| | Coals and sundry petty expenses | 5 | 7 | 11 | | | | |
| | | | | | 143 | 11 | 3 | |
| March 31. | Balance, viz. — | | | | | | | |
| | at Messrs. Twinings | 700 | 10 | 11 | | | | |
| | at Messrs. Barnetts & Co. | 98 | 7 | 0 | | | | |
| | at Messrs. Herries & Co. | 70 | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| | Petty Cash | 5 | 10 | 5 | | | | |
| | | | | | 874 | 12 | 6 | |
| | | | | | £1487 | 11 | 7 | |

NOTE. — Since the 31st of March, there has been received £345 4*s.* 11*d.* in addition to the above.

The above account has been examined with the books and vouchers and found correct; the balance at the credit of the Association on 31st of March, 1853, being £874 12*s.* 6*d.*

10th May, 1853. HENSHAW H. RUSSELL, WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE, } AUDITORS.

LONDON: SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW, New-street-Square.



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